



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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November 15, 2016

**Transitioning to Schoolwide  
For Schools  
At or Above 40% Poverty**

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

FROM: Karen L. Campbell, Director  
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services

SUBJECT: Title I Schoolwide Programs – *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*  
Title I, Part A: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (Title I)

Each year, additional Title I schools become approved to operate Title I schoolwide programs, although there still remain some Title I eligible schools that have not taken advantage of a primary means to maximize the use of Title I funds – the Title I, Part A schoolwide program. To that end, the New Jersey Department of Education (Department) is advising districts of the process for schools at or above 40 percent poverty to apply for Title I schoolwide status in 2017-2018.

**The process described in this notification pertains solely to schools with poverty percentages at or above 40 percent.** Any district with a school meeting the 40 percent poverty requirement that plans to transition to a Title I schoolwide program beginning in the 2017-2018 school year must notify the Department by completing and submitting the 2017-2018 Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program by **Friday, December 2, 2016**, to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs via email at [schoolwide@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:schoolwide@doe.state.nj.us). The Department has posted the [Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program](#) form online. **Please note:** Under §1114(a)(B) of *ESSA*, an exception exists for schools with poverty percentages less than 40 percent to operate schoolwide programs. Schools for which this exception applies should not submit the 2017-2018 Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program at this time. Further information on the process to obtain a waiver for the exception will be forthcoming.

Eligible schools may choose to operate Title I schoolwide programs as a means to upgrade the entire educational program of the schools through comprehensive schoolwide reforms. This comprehensive schoolwide process provides schools with the flexibility to address the needs of all students (particularly those who are low-performing), families and staff, as well as explore how to most effectively leverage federal, state and local funds in order to promote schoolwide reforms that raise the academic performance throughout the school.

In addition, the Title I schoolwide process affords schools the opportunity to improve students' skills outside academic subject areas, such as counseling, school-based mental health programs, career and technical education programs, coursework for postsecondary credit, schoolwide tiered models to address effective behavior support, professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals and other school personnel to improve instruction and the use of data from academic assessments, and transition services from early childhood education to elementary school programs.

In accordance to the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* §1114, a school electing to transition to a Title I schoolwide program must complete the following:

- Conduct at least one year of planning, which may be waived if the school has previously been operating under a strategic plan or improvement plan that addresses the entire school;
- Consult with all relevant school stakeholder groups; and
- Complete a Title I Schoolwide Plan that describes and details the planned changes in the educational program of the entire school by addressing the following required components:
  1. A Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the entire school;
  2. Strategies to address school needs, including a description of how such strategies will:
    - a) Provide opportunities for all children, including each subgroup of students, as defined in §1111(b)(2), to meet the challenging state academic standards;
    - b) Use methods and instructional strategies that strengthen the academic program in the school, increase the amount and quality of learning time, and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum, which may include programs, activities and courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education; and
    - c) Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of those at risk of not meeting the challenging state academic standards, through various support activities.

For further information on Title I schoolwide programs, please review the following United States Department of Education (USED) guidance documents:

- [USED Schoolwide Letter to Chief State School Officials](#) – July 30, 2015, focuses on various aspects of schoolwide programs and serves as a schoolwide resource tool;
- [“Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program”](#) highlights specific advantages and flexibilities inherent in schoolwide programs;
- [“Designing Schoolwide Programs”](#) specifically addresses the program requirements; and
- [“Title I Fiscal Issues”](#) addresses consolidating funds in schoolwide programs.

For a school with a poverty percentage at or above 40 percent, upon receipt of the 2017-2018 Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program, the Department will assist school staff in the planning and facilitation of the school's transition to a schoolwide program.

As part of this transition process, representatives from applicant schools must participate in the following webinar for information on the programmatic and budgeting changes for newly-operating schoolwide programs:

**Tuesday, November 16, 2016** (1 hour webinar)

“Transitioning from a Targeted Assistance to Schoolwide Program”

On November 16, a recording of the webinar will be posted on the Department’s [Title I webpage](#).

Additionally, schools with poverty percentages at or above 40 percent that plan to transition to a schoolwide program must ensure at least two district representatives, as well as principals from each school electing to transition to a schoolwide program, participate in a mandatory webinar workshop on **Thursday, December 8, 2016**. To register up to four participants, districts may use the [Department’s event registration link](#).

For questions about transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program, contact Dr. Anthony Wright at [anthony.wright@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:anthony.wright@doe.state.nj.us), or email Andrea Sunderville at [andrea.sunderville@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:andrea.sunderville@doe.state.nj.us).

c:     Members, State Board of Education  
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